



## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

**FROM:** Maxine Brown-Roberts, Project Manager  
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

**DATE:** September 20, 2011

**SUBJECT:** BZA Case No.18259, 2465 18<sup>th</sup> Street, NW

### **I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION**

In its original request, 2465 18<sup>th</sup> Street LLC (Applicant) proposed to renovate and add a fourth floor and a rear addition to the building at 2465 18<sup>th</sup> Street, NW. The building would accommodate commercial use on the ground floor and five residential units on the upper floors. Subsequently, the Applicant modified the design by removing the fourth floor addition. The commercial use and the number of residential units remain unchanged. To accommodate the proposal the Applicant requested the following variance relief:

- § 772.1, Lot Occupancy (80% required for residential use, 90% proposed) and
- §774.1, Rear Yard (15 feet required, maximum of 2 feet proposed).

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the requested variance relief.

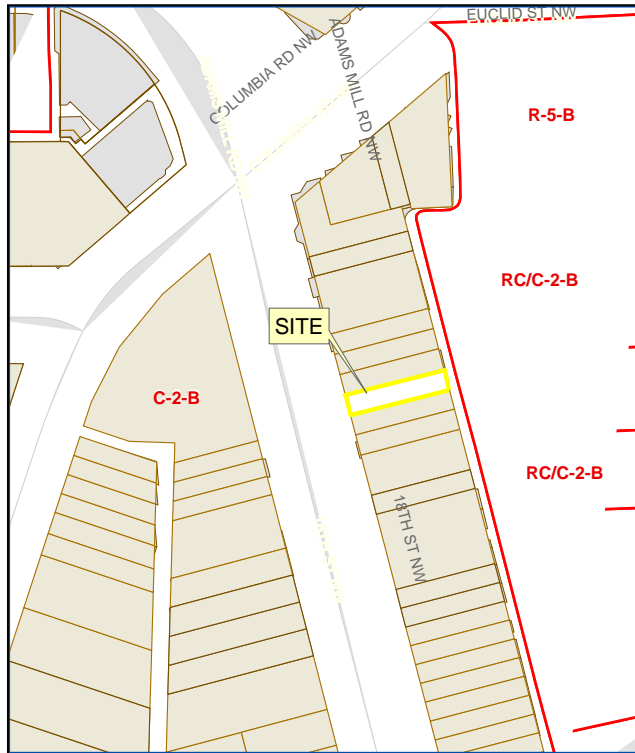
### **II. AREA AND SITE DESCRIPTION**

<b>Address:</b>	2465 18 <sup>th</sup> Street, NW
<b>Legal Description:</b>	Square 2560, Lot 76
<b>Ward:</b>	1, ANC-1C
<b>Zoning:</b>	C-2-B
<b>Lot Characteristics:</b>	The 1,725 square feet rectangular property is developed with a 3-story building. To the rear of the lot is a 16-foot wide alley. The building is currently vacant.
<b>Adjacent Properties:</b>	To the north is a 3-story building which houses a book store; to the east are apartment buildings; to the south is a 3-story building with a bistro/gallery/lounge; to the west across 18 <sup>th</sup> Street are 3-story buildings with various commercial uses.
<b>Neighborhood Character:</b>	The property is within the Adams Morgan neighborhood. 18 <sup>th</sup> Street is a very active commercial strip with a predominance of restaurants and bars and interspersed with other types of commercial uses.
<b>Historic Preservation:</b>	Kalorama Historic District

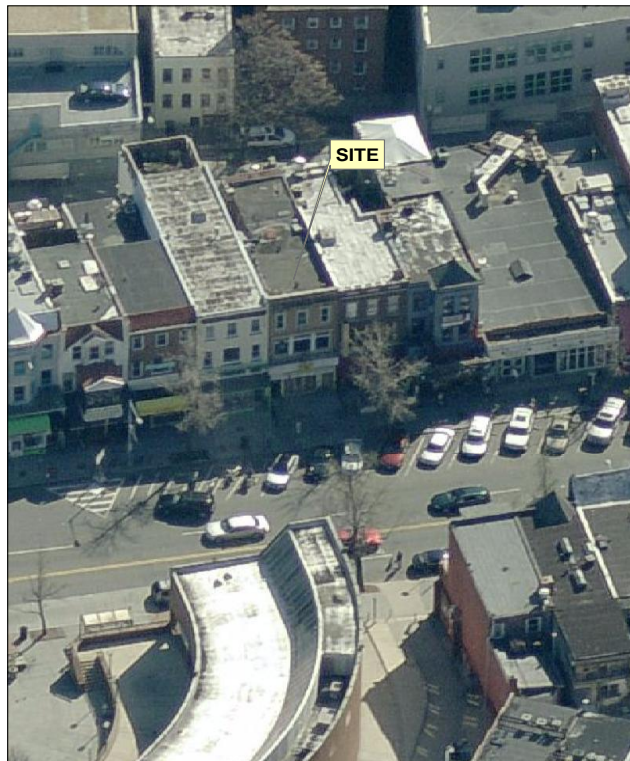


### III. MAPS

SITE LOCATION



AERIAL VIEW



#### IV. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

The Applicant wishes to renovate the existing building and construct a three-story rear addition to allow the building to accommodate ground floor retail and five residential units. The second and third floor additions would increase the residential lot occupancy and reduce the rear yard setback beyond that allowed.

#### V. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and REQUESTED RELIEF

C-2-B Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Height (ft.) § 770	65 ft.	40 ft.	46 ft.	None required
Floor Area Ratio § 771	Commercial – 1.5 Residential – 3.5 max.	Commercial – 0.67 Residential – 1.25.	Commercial – 0.87 Residential – 2.25	None required
Lot Occupancy § 772	Commercial – 100% Residential – 80% max.	Commercial – 67% Residential – 66%	Commercial – 88% <b>Residential – 90%</b>	<b>Required</b>
Rear Yard (ft.) § 774	15 ft. min.	15.75 ft.	<b>Varies – 2 ft. min.</b>	<b>Required</b>

#### VI. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

As seen on the table above, the addition would increase the residential lot occupancy from 66% to 90% (§772.1) and would decrease the rear yard from 15.75 feet to 2 feet (§ 774.1).

##### i. Uniqueness Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

*The Applicant states that the property is unique due to an exceptional situation as it has a seven foot setback within which construction is not allowed because the building is a designated contributing structure to the historic district. This eliminates approximately 400 square feet of developable space. Further, development of the site is limited by the required rear setback thus limiting the building to the center of the property.*

*It is the Applicant's contention that the front setback and the required rear yard presents a practical difficulty as the resultant building would have awkward floor plans with units of approximately 440 square feet, with shallow rooms, inefficient circulation corridors and insufficient light and air to the residential units.*

The Office of Planning concurs with the Applicant that the seven-foot setback and the required rear yard does affect the available developable area. If the addition were to increase the building to the matter-of-right 80% lot occupancy the result would be one 800 square foot unit. The applicant has stated that for this location, one unit at 800 square feet is large and not marketable in this area while if the space were to be divided into two units they would be too small with very shallow rooms and inefficient circulation corridors.

Because the applicant is unable to capture the square footage in the front of the building as others have done along 18<sup>th</sup> Street, it necessitates the extension into the rear yard, which also impacts the

lot occupancy. The increase to 90% lot occupancy and the 2-foot rear yard are necessary to allow two modest, efficiency units which would be approximately 600 square feet, with between 390 to 420 square feet of useable space. Therefore, the front setback presents a practical difficulty of meeting the lot occupancy and the rear yard requirements while at the same time constructing units which are of reasonable sizes and efficient corridors and meet the market demand in this area.

## **ii. Detriment to the Public Good**

The proposed rear addition that increases the lot occupancy and reduces the rear yard should not greatly impact the light, air or enjoyment of the adjacent properties as both adjacent buildings extend into their rear yards greater than or similar to the proposed addition. There are no privacy concerns as the adjacent properties extend to or close to the property line. Therefore, no substantial detriment to the public good would be derived from the proposed addition.

## **iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations**

The Applicant has demonstrated that the development of the property under the matter-or-right lot occupancy and rear yard requirements presents some difficulty which would limit its efficient upgrading and reuse.. However, the proposed lot occupancy and a 2-foot rear yard would allow the property to be used in a manner that would not substantially harm the zone plan and would not negatively impact the use of adjacent properties. OP is very supportive of proposals to renovate buildings and add residential units to streets which encourage a mix of uses with ground floor retail and residential use on the upper floors.

## **VII. Historic Preservation**

The property is a contributing building to the Kalorama Historic District. The proposal was reviewed by the Historic Preservation Review Board and it was determined that the proposed addition would not have an adverse impact on the historic district.

## **VIII. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES**

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) conveyed verbally to OP that they had no comments. OP is not aware of comments from any other District agency.

## **IX. COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

The property is within ANC-1C. On September 5, 2011 the application was reviewed by the ANC which voted to recommend approval of the requested variances.